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ABSTRACT

The use of "have," "got," "have got," and alternate forms was investigated in the speech of Anglo and black grade-school children from lower and middle income neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Techniques were devised to elicit multiple occurrences of the construction, including questions and negatives. One technique used was a convergent communication technique in which children were seated at opposite ends of a table with an opaque screen placed between them and were asked to describe similar or different pictures from the one which their partner held. The use of "have got" by Anglo children seemed to result from a transformational "got"-insertion rule as indicated by these two sentences: "Joan has big hands. Joan has got big hands." No evidence indicated such a rule in Black English. Acquisition of the "have got" structure does not seem to be complete for all children at the kindergarten and first-grade level. There are forms used by these children which do not occur elsewhere, notably "haves," and a lack among young Anglo children of "have got." Social differences in use associated with number were noted. Children from lower income black schools used person-number agreement much less frequently than did black children in middle income areas. (MKM)

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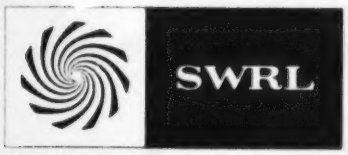

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HAVE/GOT IN THE SPEECH OF ANGLO AND BLACK CHILDREN

Robert Berdan

ABSTRACT

The use of HAVE/GOT and its alternate surface realizations were investigated in the speech of Anglo and Black grade-school children from lower and middle income neighborhoods. Techniques were devised to elicit multiple occurrences of the construction in a range of diagnostic environments, including questions and negatives. The use of have got by Anglo children is shown to result from a transformational Got-Insertion rule. No such rule exists for the Black children; HAVE and GOT are independent lexical items. Some of the forms used by younger children appear to represent developmental stages, rather than ethnic dialects.

CS 501 412

HAVE/GOT IN THE SPEECH OF ANGLO AND BLACK CHILDREN*

Robert Berdan

For the past century HAVE/GOT, as used in (1), has been the subject of considerable contention.

(1) He's got long hair.

Writers of grammar handbooks and teachers alike have damned the collocation have got with such epithets as "redundant," "pleonastic," and "nonsensical" (Crowell, 1955, p.2). Many would agree with Richard White, who in 1870 condemned it as "not only wrong, but if right, superfluous" (Rice, 1932, p. 284). These prescriptivists would allow only

(2) He has long hair.

A. C. Bartlett (1949, p. 280) described this proscription as coming from the "New Rich English speakers and writers, those who have learned enough about their language to be self-conscious but not enough to be certain of anything." Actually use of possessive have got dates back to at least 1516; it was used by Samuel Johnson in his dictionary. The list of authors who have used it in their writings reads like a bibliography for an English literature course.

Not surprisingly, such arguments have little to do with what people, children in particular, actually say. Among children, at least, (1) and (2) are only two of a larger set of alternatives used for the possessive verb. All of the forms in (3) may also occur:

(3) a. He have long hair.
b. He haves long hair.
c. He got long hair.
d. He gots long hair.

Data for this paper are from studies done at SWRL Educational Research and Development with Anglo and Black children ranging in age from kindergarten to sixth grade, in schools ranging from low to middle income neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

Several elicitation procedures were employed to obtain HAVE/GOT data. The first was adapted from the Baldwin and Garvey's (1970) convergent communication studies in Baltimore. In this procedure two children are seated at opposite sides of a table. An opaque screen

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is placed between them so that they can not see each other, but can communicate freely. In a typical task, one child is given a set of pictures, and the other child is given one picture from the set. To perform the task successfully the children must determine which picture in the set is identical to the single picture.

Tasks of this type have been found to generate constructions of the kind in (1-3) at relatively high frequency; much higher than casual conversation. They occur in affirmative statements, in questions, and with negation. Analysis of these protocols showed that certain kinds of descriptive statements tended to be formed with the copula while others were formed with some realization of HAVE. For example, when the child described attributes of the whole object, e.g., its size or color, the typical statement employed some form of the copula:

(4) He's big and green.

But when the description involved some part of the object, it typically employed some realization of HAVE.

(5) He has a pointy hat and big feet.

Using this information in subsequent interviews, sets of tasks were constructed with pictures of pairs of objects, with members of a pair differing in some one property (Berdan & Pfaff, 1972). The children were asked to describe the difference between the two objects. It was possible to develop a fair degree of control over the syntactic constructions employed in the children's responses, without biasing the response by giving them any model to repeat. For example, when two objects differed by the presence or absence of some part, if the object with the part was shown before the object without the part, the answer took the form

(6) a. This one has a hat and this one doesn't.
b. This one have a hat and this one don't.

If the order of the objects was reversed so that the object with the part was shown last, the response took the form of (7) with a negated verb and reduced form of the affirmative:

(7) a. This one doesn't have a hat and this one does.
b. This one don't have a hat and this one do.

STANDARD ENGLISH HAVE/GOT

Zwicky (1970) uses two criteria--susceptibility to contraction and tag question formation--to establish three classes of HAVE. The first class may be called Auxiliary HAVE. It allows contraction (8a) and forms tag questions with HAVE (8b) rather than DO (8c).

(8) a. John's eaten his sandwich.
b. John's eaten his sandwich, hasn't he?
c. *John's eaten his sandwich, doesn't he?

The second class of HAVE includes the main verb HAVE "in its central senses of possession, location, availability, and the like" (Zwicky, 1970, p. 329). Main verb HAVE does not normally allow contraction (9a) and forms tag questions with either HAVE (9b) or DO (9c). The terms "auxiliary" and "main verb" are used here in a traditional sense.

(9) a. *John's a salami sandwich.
b. John has a salami sandwich, hasn't he?
c. John has a salami sandwich, doesn't he?

Zwicky's (p. 329) third class includes the main verb HAVE "in various restricted, idiomatic, or derived usages." These do not allow contraction (10a) and form tag questions only with DO (10c), not with HAVE (10b).

(10) a. *John's a drink every night.
b. *John has a drink every night, hasn't he?
c. John has a drink every night, doesn't he?

Of these three classes, only main verb HAVE meaning possess may be substituted by HAVE GOT without change of meaning. The sentences of (11) paraphrase (9), but (12) is ungrammatical, and (13), if grammatical, does not mean the same as (10):

(11) a. John's got a salami sandwich.
b. John's got a salami sandwich, hasn't he?
c. John's got a salami sandwich, doesn't he?

(12) *John's got eaten his sandwich.

(13) John's got a drink every night.

HAVE, GOT, and HAVE GOT all occur in a variety of constructions where the meaning is not that of sentences (1-3). In (14) GOT has the meaning obtain or receive, rather than possess. Some American speakers, like the British, also use got, rather than gotten, as the past participle of get (15b).

(14) a. Mary gets a lot of mail.
b. Mary got a letter yesterday.

(15) a. Mary has gotten a lot of mail this week.
b. Mary has got a lot of mail this week.

Besides the possessive sentences in (11) and the possible perfective sense of obtain in (15b) HAVE GOT is used as a quasi-modal of obligation (16):

(16) He's got to finish before midnight.

This paper, however, will consider in detail only the possessive uses of HAVE, GOT, and HAVE GOT, as in sentences (1-3).

Main verb HAVE retains the meaning possess with any sequence of tense auxiliaries in (17):

(17) a. John has his billfold in his back pocket.
b. John had his billfold in his back pocket.
c. John has had his billfold in his back pocket.
d. John had had his billfold in his back pocket.
e. John will have his billfold in his back pocket.
f. John will have had his billfold in his back pocket.

This is not true with GOT. GOT has the meaning possess, rather than obtain only in the sequence HAVE GOT (18a). Neither the past auxiliary had (18b), nor any other tense auxiliary may be used and retain the meaning possess.

(18) a. John has got his billfold in his back pocket.
b. *John had got his billfold in his back pocket.
c. *John will get his billfold in his back pocket.
d. *John will have got his billfold in his back pocket.

There are other syntactic and semantic restrictions on HAVE GOT that do not apply to main verb HAVE. Rosenbaum (1967) argued that verbs may be categorized according to which complementizers they may dominate. The restrictions on HAVE GOT appear to be rather the complementizers by which it may be dominated. Main verb HAVE may occur in any of the complement constructions of (19). However, HAVE GOT may only be dominated by the that complementizer (20a).

(19) a. Richard pretends that he has an idea.
b. Richard pretends to have an idea.
c. Richard discourages having ideas.

(20) a. Richard pretends that he has got an idea.
b. *Richard pretends to have got an idea.
c. *Richard discourages having got ideas.

The restriction on the use of HAVE GOT with the complementizers in (20b) and (20c) is not a general restriction on a sequence of auxiliary and main verb, even with auxiliary HAVE and main verb get in the sense of obtain as shown in (21):

(21) a. Richard pretends to have gotten the idea.
b. Richard dislikes having gotten secret information.

A similar pattern occurs with modals and quasi-modals. Either auxiliary HAVE (22b) or main verb HAVE (22a) may follow modals, but HAVE GOT (22c) may not.

(22) a. I expected that John would still have his old car.
b. I expected that John would have gotten his old car back.
c. *I expected that John would still have got his old car.

Each of these syntactic facts about the differences between the distribution of main verb HAVE and HAVE GOT may be accounted for by one generalization: HAVE GOT may not occur in any context in which HAVE is not subject to person-number agreement. This precludes any tense except simple present tense (17-18); the POSS-ing complementizer of (20c) which requires the participle; the for-to complementizer of (20b) which requires the uninflected infinitive; and the modals and quasi-modals, which also require the infinitive.

There are also semantic restrictions on HAVE GOT that do not apply to HAVE. The restrictions more or less parallel Zwicky's distinction between main verb HAVE and other peripheral meanings of HAVE: the sentences which do not allow HAVE tag questions cannot have HAVE GOT.

(23) a. Henry always has a good time, doesn't he?
b. *Henry always has a good time, hasn't he?
c. *Henry always has got a good time.

(24) a. Henry's wife has a baby every twelve months, doesn't she?
b. *Henry's wife has a baby every twelve months, hasn't she?
c. *Henry's wife has got a baby every twelve months.

(25) a. Henry always has a drink before he goes home, doesn't he?
b. *Henry always has a drink before he goes home hasn't he?
c. *Henry always has got a drink before he goes home.

At least part of the distinction noted by Zwicky appears to be the difference between the stative and non-stative use of HAVE. Sentences which do not allow HAVE tag questions and do not allow HAVE GOT, generally can occur in the constructions claimed to be diagnostic of stative verbs (Lakoff, 1966):

(26) a. (pseudocleft) What Henry did was have a good time.
b. (complement of persuade) I persuaded Henry to have a good time.
c. (Do-so) Henry had a good time and Richard did so too.
d. (Progressive) Henry is having a good time.
e. (Imperative) Have a good time, Henry.

On the other hand, sentences which do allow HAVE tag questions and HAVE GOT (27) do not occur in these environments (28):

(27) a. John has a ruptured appendix, hasn't he?
b. John's got a ruptured appendix.

(28) a. *What John did was have a ruptured appendix.
b. *I persuaded John to have a ruptured appendix.
c. *John had a ruptured appendix and Mary did so too.
d. *John is having a ruptured appendix.
e. *Have a ruptured appendix, John.

There are other syntactic restrictions on main verb HAVE and HAVE GOT. They do not occur in the passive except in certain idioms (29, 30).

(29) a. *The books were had by John.
b. *The books have been got by John.

(30) I've been had.

Neither main verb HAVE nor HAVE GOT allows indirect object inversion, although inversion can occur with get in the sense obtain (Bates, 1970):

(31) a. I have a bear for Bill.
b. *I have Bill a bear.

(32) a. I've got a bear for Bill.
b. *I've got Bill a bear.

(33) a. I've gotten a bear for Bill.
b. I've gotten Bill a bear

It appears that GOT adds no lexical information to the stative, main verb HAVE, and occurs only in constructions in which HAVE would in fact have the meaning possess in some stative sense. Further, HAVE GOT is restricted to surface syntactic constructions in which Standard English marks HAVE for person agreement.

BLACK ENGLISH HAVE/GOT

As already stated, the actual speech of the children, as expected, departed in some respects from this idealized standard. Sentences with

have got comparable to the taboo sentence (1) were not used by the Black children, though not for any of the reasons which would be countenanced by the prescriptive grammarians. All of the rest of the forms in (2) and (3) were used by Black children.

The difference between (2) and (3a) is obviously the presence or absence of person/number agreement. Dillard (1972) and others claim that in Black English there is no marking for number agreement. For some Black children this appears to be true, though definitely not for all, particularly the children of the Black middle class.

The agreement markers for HAVE and DO in Standard English are irregular; has and does rather than haves and do's as one might expect from the general rules applying to other verbs. It was found that children who used uninflected HAVE also used uninflected DO. Sentence (34b) is the question equivalent of (34a), and (34c) is its negation.

(34) a. This one have a window.
b. Do this one have a window.
c. This one don't have a window and this one do.

Some of the children showed variation between the use of uninflected forms (34) and the inflected forms in (35). However, most consistently either did or did not use inflected forms of HAVE and DO.

(35) a. This one has a window.
b. This one doesn't have a window and this one does.

The use of inflection with other main verbs was also examined and it was found that children who do not inflect other main verbs do not inflect the irregular HAVE and DO. But there are some children who do inflect regular verbs and do not inflect HAVE or DO.

The situation with haves as in (3b) is not quite so clear. It was used only by Black children and only by children in the lower grades, primarily from the middle income school. Children who used haves also inflected DO and the regular verbs. Some of these children also used has. For these children who alternated between haves and has, it was very tempting to say that they showed variation between regular and irregular use of agreement. However, it may have been the case that, for these children at least, has represented not the Standard English has but the application of consonant cluster simplification to the final consonants of third singular haves. The surface results are the same, of course. None of the children who showed this alternation between has and haves also used do's. The children's treatment of other final sequences of sibilants has not yet been examined and until that has been done, the status of has for these children will remain unclear.

The use of GOT in Black English is quite different from its use in Standard English. None of the sentences in (36) occurred.

(36) a. This one's got a window.
b. Has this one got a window?
c. This one hasn't got a window.

Instead GOT, like any other main verb, formed questions and negation with DO (37):

(37) a. This one got a window.
b. Do this one got a window?
c. This one don't got a window.
d. This one don't got no window and this one do.

This leads to the interesting, but potentially confusing situation, in which Black English possessive GOT in (37a) can only mean obtained in Standard English, while the sequence HAVE GOT, which is only possessive in Standard English, can mean either possess or have obtained in Black English.

Some children who used agreement with other main verbs also used agreement with DO, giving the sentences of (38) rather than those of (37):

(38) a. Does this one got a window?
b. This one doesn't got a window.

A few of these children who used agreement also inflected GOT in the affirmative statement (39):

(39) This one gots a window.

Clearly, for these children GOT is a regular main verb which inflects for agreement and requires Do-Support.

However, there were some other children who used gots in sentences like (39) who also used it in (40). For these children gots, rather than got, appears to be the underlying form.

(40) a. Do this one gots a window?
b. This one don't gots a window.

Most of the children consistently used forms with GOT or forms with HAVE; few used both.

ANGLO ENGLISH HAVE/GOT

The Anglo children interviewed never used uninflected have in third singular contexts; none used the inflected form haves. However, this is not to say that all Anglo children use only Standard English

forms. No kindergarten or first-grade children used the sequence HAVE GOT; older Anglo children did. When younger Anglo children used GOT it was used as a main verb, as by Black children, but always with agreement, as in (38) and (39). The exception to this was the use of don't got. Don't is the negation of both do and does for some Anglo children, and some who used affirmative has got and have got used only don't got in the negative.

In environments where contraction is possible, affirmative statements, the HAVE of HAVE GOT was always contracted; none of the children used the full forms have or has in these environments. In the environments which allow contracted HAVE, some children used GOT with no auxiliary; this happened only with have for Anglo children; never where agreement required has.

THE GRAMMARS OF HAVE/GOT

Standard English

These facts have several implications for the construction of grammars. First the grammar for Standard English.

There is no semantic motivation for identifying main verb HAVE with auxiliary HAVE. There is no notion of the perfect in possession; nor is any sense of possession inherent in the temporal notion of perfect. This becomes even more apparent when one looks at languages other than English. Few show any lexical similarity between perfective auxiliary and possessive verb, if in fact such a verb exists in the language.[1]

There also seems to be no syntactic motivation for identifying the main verb with the auxiliary. Many of the parallels that obtain between the copula BE and the tense auxiliary BE do not hold for the auxiliary HAVE and the main verb HAVE. Consider the paradigms (41) through (47). In each of these auxiliary BE, copula BE, and auxiliary HAVE exhibit one type of behavior while possessive HAVE exhibits another behavior identical to other main verbs.

1. Questions. BE is preposed in questions whether it is used as a copula (41a) or as an auxiliary (41b). Auxiliary HAVE (41d) may be preposed, but not main verb HAVE (41c). HAVE may be preposed in HAVE GOT (41e).

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[1]Arguments for deriving main verb HAVE and auxiliary HAVE from a common source are presented in Bach (1967). That paper does not consider any of the syntactic arguments presented here, nor does it deal with have got.

(41) a. Is John the new vice president?
b. Is John running for vice president?
c. *Has John his instructions?
d. Has John received his instructions?
e. Has John got his instructions?

Like other main verbs, HAVE forms questions with Do-Support in American Anglo English.

(42) a. Does John like his instructions?
b. Does John have his instructions?

2. Contracted Negation. The same pattern is apparent with Neg contraction: BE may be attached to the contracted Neg, either as auxiliary or as copula. Main verb HAVE (43c) requires Do-Support (44).

(43) a. John isn't the new vice president
b. John isn't running for vice president.
c. *John hasn't his instructions.
d. John hasn't received his instructions.
e. John hasn't got his instructions.

(44) a. John doesn't like the new vice president.
b. John doesn't have his instructions.

3. Auxiliary Contraction. Likewise with auxiliary contraction. BE may contract either as verb or auxiliary: HAVE may contract only as auxiliary (45):

(45) a. John's the new vice president.
b. John's running for vice president.
c. *John's his instructions.
d. John's received his instructions.
e. John's got his instructions.

4. Auxiliary Shift. This rule is used by Baker (1971) to transpose the auxiliary and certain preverbs if the auxiliary is not stressed:

(46) a. John is already angry.
b. John is already running for vice president.
c. *John has already his instructions.
d. John has already received his instructions.
e. John has already got his instructions.

5. Auxiliary Attraction. Certain negative preverbs allow the auxiliary to be preposed (Fillmore, 1966).

(47) a. Only rarely is the bus on time.
b. Only rarely is anyone actually working.
c. *Only rarely has John his instructions.

d. Only rarely has John received all the instructions he needed.
e. Only rarely has John got all the instructions he needs.

In each of these five constructions possessive HAVE is unlike auxiliaries, but like other main verbs. HAVE GOT appears to be a sequence of auxiliary and main verb. In the two following constructions HAVE has properties both of an auxiliary and of a main verb.

6. Tag Question.

(48) a. John has a new car, hasn't he?
b. John has a new car, doesn't he?

(49) a. John has got a new car, hasn't he?
b. John has got a new car, doesn't he?

Sentences (48a, 49a) follow the pattern of an auxiliary; (48b, 49b) follow the pattern of a main verb. However, if the main sentence is negated, only the auxiliary to which the negative is attached may occur in the tag question (50):

(50) a. *John doesn't have a new car, has he?
b. John doesn't have a new car, does he?

(51) a. John hasn't got a new car, has he?
b. *John hasn't got a new car, does he?

7. Conjunction Reduction. Reduced conjoined sentences show a pattern similar to Tag Questions except that negative hasn't got may be replaced either by has (55a) or does (55b).

(52) a. John has a new car and so has Mary.
b. John has a new car and so does Mary.

(53) a. John has got a new car and so has Mary.
b. John has got a new car and so does Mary.

(54) a. *John doesn't have a new car and neither has Mary.
b. John doesn't have a new car and neither does Mary.

(55) a. John hasn't got a new car and neither has Mary.
b. John hasn't got a new car and neither does Mary.

In clearly possessive contexts the verb HAVE exhibits the characteristics of a main verb, not of an auxiliary. These facts warrant positing at least one main verb HAVE in the grammar of Standard English. And given the acceptability of sentences like (56) but the strangeness of (57) one might want to claim there is more than one such verb.

(56) Every night John has a scotch and soda, Bill a Manhattan, and Martha a Tom Collins.

(57) *Every summer John has a new car, his wife a baby, their son a drink, and their daughter a cold.

The status of HAVE GOT may be considered next. First, in each of these constructions GOT is semantically void; it adds nothing to the meaning of the sentence. Second, although HAVE does not take on the meaning of the perfective in HAVE GOT, it does function syntactically as an auxiliary. Third, there are restrictions on the occurrence of HAVE GOT that are not normally nor easily stated in the lexicon. For example, one must account for the fact that (58a) is possessive but (58b), if grammatical, is not.

(58) a. It seems that John's got some more money.
b. ?John seems to have got some more money.

All of this suggests that GOT may best be inserted by transformational rule. These arguments are similar in form to the arguments which have been advanced for There-Insertion and Do-Support.

The Got-Insertion rule must perform two operations. It moves HAVE to the auxiliary and inserts GOT in its place, converting (59a) to (59b).

(59) a. John $[\text{present}]_{\text{aux}}$ $[\text{HAVE}]_{\text{verb}}$ big hands
b. John $[\text{present HAVE}]_{\text{aux}}$ $[\text{GOT}]_{\text{verb}}$ big hands

As desired, this allows HAVE to function as an auxiliary but assigns it no notion of the perfect. There are some restrictions in the structural index on the application of the rule. It must occur in the environment of present tense. This precludes the ungrammatical sentences of (18). And if the rule is made last cyclic, it precludes (58b) as well as (20b, c) where the complement process deletes tense.

Anglo English

This Standard English grammar accounts for most facts observed in speech of the Anglo children without modifications. However, for the kindergarten and first-grade children who inflect GOT in the third singular to gots and form questions with does got, there seems no reason to posit any rule of Got-Insertion. These children seem to have two possessive verbs: HAVE and GOT. Each of them functions for the child like any other main verb.

The other fact which needs explanation for Anglo children is the use of HAVE GOT in questions, but don't got in negation. For these children the use of GOT reflects some of the characteristics

of the Standard English grammar and some of the characteristics of the developmental grammar of the younger children.

Black English

In the speech of the Black children there appear to be two independent verbs of possession: GOT and HAVE. There is no motivation for any kind of transformation relation between them.

Loflin (1970) described Black English as having no auxiliary HAVE. His data were drawn largely from the speech of one 14-year-old boy. Based on the assumption that there is no HAVE auxiliary, Loflin developed a tense system for Black English different from the Standard English tense system.

If the HAVE of HAVE GOT is in fact identical to auxiliary HAVE with other verbs, and if Loflin is correct that Black English has no auxiliary HAVE, it is possible to account for the Black English GOT rather than HAVE GOT from the general absence of HAVE auxiliary, assuming of course that Black English has no Got-Insertion rule as has been suggested for Standard English.

However, other studies by Labov and others (1968) have shown that HAVE auxiliary does in fact exist in Black English. In this study the same children who never used HAVE GOT did use auxiliary HAVE with other main verbs. But as Labov has also shown, the HAVE auxiliary was frequently deleted.

One could argue that Black English is just like Standard English with respect to HAVE GOT, except that the independently motivated rules of auxiliary contraction and deletion delete HAVE from HAVE GOT. However, the auxiliary contraction and deletion rules do not operate in all environments. For example, when the auxiliary is preposed in question or when it occurs with contracted negation the contraction and deletion rules block, giving (60):

(60) Have you ever eaten pork?

It is exactly these environments, question and negation, in which GOT occurs only with DO auxiliary, not HAVE. The contraction and deletion rules cannot be used to explain Black English GOT.

CONCLUSIONS

The facts of HAVE/GOT are somewhat confounded by the multitude of nonpossessive uses, both of HAVE and of GOT; and by the dialectical differences in their use. Within the speech of children, at least, many variations occur. Some of these appear to result from different

lexical representations, such as the use of GOTS in all instances, rather than GOT. Some differences result from differences in rules: The difference between Anglo-English HAVE GOT and Black English GOT. For some forms, such as the use of haves, it is difficult to determine whether there is a difference in the morphology or a difference in underlying forms. The facts of Standard English seem best described by positing a rule of Got-Insertion. There is no evidence for such a rule in Black English.

Acquisition of this construction does not seem to be complete for all children at the kindergarten and first-grade level. There are forms used by these children which do not occur elsewhere, notably haves, and a lack among young Anglo children of HAVE GOT.

There are also social differences in use associated with income level. Particularly, children from lower income Black schools use person-number agreement much less frequently than did Black children in middle income areas.

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